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SUBJECT: EMBASSY CAIRO SUBMISSION FOR 2007 TIP REPORT

REF: 2006 STATE 202745

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

11. (SBU) This message responds to reftel. Embassy POC is poloff Roger Kenna, phone 20-2-797-2749, fax 20-2-797-2181, kennart2@state.gov. Poloff spent approximately 16 hours in the preparation of the TIP report. PA officer spent two hours; ECPO Minister Counselor spent two hours; DCM spent two hours. The GOE does not have a POC for TIP. Information in this report was gleaned from bilateral meetings, other diplomatic contacts, and press reporting. The following input is keyed to the questions in reftel paras 27-30.

1I. Overview

1A. Egypt is neither a country of origin or destination for a significant number of trafficking victims. However, an unknown number of trafficking victims probably transit Egypt en route to other destinations, notably Israel and Europe. There are currently no reliable estimates available in Egypt for the magnitude of the problem.

1B. The trafficking scenario most commonly cited involves young women from Eastern Europe arriving in Egypt by air, especially in the Red Sea resorts of Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada. The women then travel overland, often with the facilitation of Bedouin smugglers, across the border into Israel where they are presumed to be forcibly employed in that country's sex industry. There were no confirmed cases of such trafficking in Egypt in 2006 by the GOE or by Egyptian media sources, but there were occasional media reports of intercepted illegal migrants who may have been trafficking victims. A number of illegal migrants from south and East Asia may also transit the Suez Canal en route to Europe. Some of these migrants may be trafficking victims. We are not aware of any surveys or research on the extent or nature of trafficking in Egypt.

Media reports indicate that Italy is the destination for significant numbers of illegal Egyptian migrants who seek to cross the Mediterranean, often with the help of smugglers.

Embassy Cairo has repeatedly raised the issue of Trafficking in Persons with the Government of Egypt at both the

Ministerial and working levels. In all of our discussions, GOE officials have expressed determination to fight the problem, to the extent that it exists in Egypt, and have sought from the U.S. any available information that could help identify extant trafficking networks inside the country.

In January 2006, First Lady Suzanne Mubarak addressed an international meeting in Athens on TIP and said that her NGO, the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement (SMWIPM), is committed to fighting TIP of women and children.

Also in May 2006, addressing an IOM conference in Cairo in Cairo and a WEF meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh, Mrs. Mubarak called for international cooperation and coordination to eliminate trafficking.

Reports from Israel suggest that that country is realizing some success in its effort to combat trafficking into the country for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. We believe that any Israeli successes in the fight against TIP will correlate to a corresponding drop in the number of trafficking victims who transit Egypt en route to Israel. According to a November 15, 2006 Jerusalem Post article, Israeli police success in policing the land border with Egypt had led "more and more women" to use "forged passports to bypass the route through Sinai and across the long desert border with Egypt in favor of an easy arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport." According to earlier Israeli press reporting, based on "police data," 2005 witnessed a significant drop in the number of foreign women working as prostitutes in Israel, from 3000 in 2001 to "several hundred" in 2005. This anecdotal information suggests that the number of trafficking victims transiting Sinai may also have significantly decreased.

1C. Limitations on the government's ability to address TIP include budgetary constraints and treaty restrictions on infrastructural improvements and troop numbers, along the Egyptian-Israeli border, under the Camp David Accord. The GOE devotes significant resources toward patrolling and policing its borders. Geography and resource limitations preclude total success. During bilateral meetings with U.S. officials in 2006, GOE officials repeatedly asserted that human trafficking through Sinai was not a significant problem.

1D. There is no evidence to suggest involvement of any kind of either Governmental authorities or individual members of Government forces in facilitating or condoning trafficking. Due to lack of training and resource limitations, individual Government officials may not be well equipped to identify and prevent instances of trafficking. Egyptian law prohibits prostitution as well as the solicitation and facilitation of commercial sex. The "sale of child brides" has not been documented, per se, although the payment of dowries and marriage at relatively young ages are in keeping with some cultural traditions. Girls marrying below the age of 18 require parental permission. Girls below the age of 16 may not marry. Infringements of these laws are thought to be common, particularly in rural areas.

II. Prevention

A-B. The Government acknowledges that some trafficking victims may transit Egypt. The Government reports that it is not currently aware of information that suggests a significant flow of such persons. Government agencies that are involved in combating trafficking are the border police, immigration, and customs inspectors, overseen by State Security Investigations Service, and ultimately the Ministry of Interior. Officials responsible for consular affairs or tourism can also become involved in responding to suspected trafficking cases.

1C. There are currently no anti-trafficking information or education campaigns being conducted in Egypt. In December

2006, however, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the launch of a public information campaign among Egyptian youth "to raise awareness on the dangers of illegal migration." We are aware of at least one Egyptian NGO, the Arab Institute for Migration Studies, which is beginning to systematically monitor and document trafficking in persons cases. Egyptian human rights and women's NGOs tell us they are not aware of a significant trafficking problem in Egypt.

1D. The Government devotes significant resources to patrolling and policing its borders, particularly the Sinai desert border with Israel. The Government does not currently have a specific program to monitor migration and travel patterns for evidence of trafficking although it exerts robust efforts to combat illegal migration and alien smuggling. In particular, in the aftermath of the October 7, 2004 terror bombings in Sinai, which killed 34 people, the Government has made a concerted effort to increase security in Sinai, especially with regard to alleged illegal activities by the Sinai Bedouin tribes. In November 2006, for example, the Middle East News Agency (MENA, the GOE wire service) reported that government security forces were engaged in a "massive crackdown operation in north Sinai" against suspected terrorist and criminal elements.

1E. Egyptian civil society is not focused on TIP. On human rights and related matters, Egyptian civil society has a sometimes contentious relationship with the GOE.

1F. Anecdotal information supplied by GOE border security personnel suggests that the GOE does not have a comprehensive program to monitor immigration/emigration for evidence of trafficking.

1G. The GOE indicated in November 2006 that it planned to create an official inter-ministerial body to coordinate the GOE's efforts against TIP, but this body had not been formally established as of March 1, 2007. There are a number of GOE bodies and institutions focused on tackling public corruption.

1H. The Government has not announced or presented a national plan of action to address trafficking in persons.

III. Investigation and Prosecution of Traffickers

A-C. Egyptian law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons, either for sexual exploitation or forced labor. However, other parts of the criminal code, such as laws against rape, abduction, prostitution, and forced labor, may be used to prosecute traffickers. Slavery is illegal. The maximum penalty for rape is life imprisonment. Egyptian Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials have told U.S. diplomats that they plan to draft new anti-trafficking legislation to remedy any gaps in existing legislation, but they have not provided an estimated time of completion.

1D. The prescribed penalties for rape or forcible sexual assault range from a minimum of three years to life imprisonment with hard labor. The actual penalty imposed depends on a number of factors including the ages of the victim and the perpetrator as well as their relationship.

1E. Prostitution is illegal and the activities of prostitutes (as well as brothels) are criminalized. The government generally enforces laws against prostitution.

1F. There do not appear to have been any recent government prosecutions of traffickers. In December 2003, an Egyptian court convicted Moataz Attiya Mohammad Hassan, a.k.a. Abu Qusay, of manslaughter and aiding illegal immigration for his role in the deaths of 353 persons trying to reach Australia when their boat sank. Abu Qusay was sentenced to seven-years in prison, although the sentence was reduced on appeal to three years. In February 2005, a criminal court in South

Sinai convicted Talal Soliman of attempting to smuggle 5 Russian (and/or Moldovan) women to Israel. Soliman was sentenced to 3.5 years in prison. According to press accounts, Sinai police in July 2003 had sought to detain Soliman when he was transporting the Eastern European women from south Sinai to Israel. Soliman opened fire on the police and wounded one of them before he was detained.

According to a Cairo-based Russian diplomatic source (2005 information), in September 2002, three Moldovan women were abducted from a hotel in Sharm el-Sheikh by Bedouin who raped them and apparently tried to transport them to Israel. One of the victims escaped and informed Egyptian police, who successfully rescued the other two victims and arrested the perpetrators. According to the Russian, the perpetrators were eventually convicted and received 25-year sentences. The Russian diplomat said no trafficking cases have come to his attention since that time.

1G. Egyptian law enforcement contacts generally identify Sinai Bedouin as engaging in the smuggling of contraband, possibly including humans, from Egypt into Israel. In October 2004, an Associated Press story reported that a gun battle between Bedouin smugglers and police in September had left an unspecified number of policemen wounded and 13 people, mainly Eastern European women, in Egyptian police custody. Embassy Cairo officials were unable to confirm the details of the AP account with Egyptian police contacts. Press accounts in September 2006 indicated that Bedouin criminals played a role in the effort of eight Colombian job seekers who sought to transit Sinai to reach Israel. Media reports indicated that two of the Colombians perished from thirst on the Israel side of the border before the remaining six travelers were repatriated to Colombia via their embassy in Cairo. There were several media reports that suggested that the Colombians had been kidnapped and mistreated by the Bedouin. The Colombian embassy in Cairo declined to confirm the reports of kidnapping and mistreatment.

1H. The Government is not currently known to be involved in any international investigations of trafficking cases.

1I. The Government does not currently provide specialized training in how to recognize, investigate, or prosecute instances of trafficking. The Government advises that instances of trafficking rarely come to its attention, but has explicitly requested from the U.S. any information that could identify such instances in Egypt.

J-N. The Government is not known to have ever extradited persons charged with trafficking to face prosecution in other countries. However, in the Abu Qusay case, the Government requested the defendant's extradition from Indonesia, which was granted. There is no evidence of Government involvement in or tolerance for trafficking nor is there evidence of a child sex tourism problem.

1O. Egypt is a signatory of ILO convention 182 concerning prohibition of the worst forms of child labor. Egypt is also a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (with a reservation regarding adoption) ILO Convention 29, and ILO Convention 105. Egypt is also a signatory to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.

IV. Protection and Assistance to Victims

A-I. The Government reports that its consular and immigration officials, at home and abroad, have been instructed to be on the alert for possible instances of illegal migration and fraudulent travel, which would include trafficking. However, the Government does not currently have any programs for victim assistance or specialized training for personnel in identifying trafficking victims. The Government does not currently make special provisions for victims' participation in prosecutions or for protection for

victims as witnesses nor does it provide specialized training in TIP to government officials. There are currently no NGOs in Egypt focused on providing services to trafficking victims.

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